

Message Text

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51 S

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01

L-02 EB-07 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SAB-01 /065 W

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P 071226Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 1758

INFO SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

CNO WASHINGTON DC

JCS WASHINGTON DC

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMIDEASTFOR

AMEMBASSY JIDDA SAUDI ARABIA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA0018

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : MARR, BA, US

SUBJECT : MIDDLE EAST FORCE; DISCUSSION IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

REF : MANAMA 1017 (NOTAL)

1. JANUARY 5 IN COURSE OF LONG TOUGH ASSEMBLY SESSION FOCUSED ON SECURITY ACT AND " POLITICAL DETAINEES" ISSUE FOREIGN MINISTER REPLIED VERBALLY TO QUESTION PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED RE MIDDLE EAST FORCE STATUS (REFTEL).

2. FOREIGN MINISTER'S LONG REPLY REPORTEDLY FOLLOWED GENERAL LINES HE HAD EARLIER MENTIONED (REFTEL). HE NOTED BAHRAINI CONDUCTS RELATIONS WITH U.S., AS WITH OTHER STATES, ON BASIS MUTUAL RESPECT AND REGARD FOR BAHRAIN'S NATIONAL INTEREST. US-GOB STATIONING AGREEMENT OF 1971 PUBLIC DOCUMENT REGISTERED WITH UN. DURING OCTOBER 73 WAR GOB FELT U.S. ATTITUDE TOWARD ARABS REQUIRED ACTION AGAINST U.S., I.E. JOINING IN OIL EMBARGO AND GIVING NOTICE THAT STATIONING AGREEMENT WOULD END IN ONE YEAR. SUBSEQUENTLY US-ARAB RELATIONS IMPROVED
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DRAMATICALLY, EMBARGO WAS LIFTED, AND USG REQUESTED GOB TO

RECONSIDER DECISION ON NAVAL FACILITIES. HENCE GOB HAD DETERMINED TO LET AGREEMENT REMAIN IN FORCE WHILE CONSIDERING ITS FUTURE. AGREEMENT PREDATED CONSTITUTION, WHICH PROVIDES THAT IT BE HONORED AND DOES NOT REQUIRE IT TO COME BEFORE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR APPROVAL.

3. RADICAL OPPOSITION DEPUTY MUHSIN MARHOON (WHO HAD SUBMITTED QUESTION) DOMINATED ENSUING DISCUSSION WITH LENGTHY ATTACK REPORTEDLY CLAIMING (A) US HAD IGNORED BAHRAIN'S CANCELLATION OF AGREEMENT, (B) OTHER ARAB STATES WANTED U.S. NAVY OUT OF BAHRAIN, (C) MIDDLE EAST FORCE SOPHISTICATED INTELLIGENCE GATHERING OPERATION WHICH COULD BE DIRECTED AGAINST BAHRAIN AND OTHER ARABS SINCE U.S. IS "ANTI-ARAB", (D) A SOVIET BASE WOULD BE MORE IN ARAB/BAHRAINI INTEREST, (E) BAHRAINI PEOPLE GOT NOTHING FROM U.S. NAVY PRESENCE, AND (F) ASKING WHY, IF THERE WAS A FINANCIAL TRANSACTION, IT WAS NOT REPORTED IN STATE BUDGET.

4. IN REPLY FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE PREPARED INFORM APPROPRIATE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ARRANGEMENTS FOR U.S. NAVY USE OF BAHRAIN FACILITIES. HE ASSURED ASSEMBLY NAVY PRESENCE IN NO WAY INFRINGED INTERESTS OR SOVEREIGNTY OF BAHRAIN, AND THAT NO ARAB STATE HAD PROTESTED TO OR PRESSURED GOB RE CONTINUED NAVY PRESENCE. SAID HE PREPARED TO DISCUSS QUESTION IN CONTEXT BAHRAINI INTERESTS BUT UNWILLING TO RESPOND TO MAHROON, WHO SEEMED MERELY TO BE REPRESENTING INTERESTS AND IDEOLOGY OF FOREIGN POWER.

5. FOREIGN MINISTER LEFT FOR INDIA AFTER ASSEMBLY SESSION. WHEN I TALKED WITH ASSEMBLY SPEAKER AL JISHI JANUARY 6 HE SEEMED RELAXED ABOUT THIS ISSUE, DESCRIBING HIMSELF AS "NEUTRAL". JANUARY 7 MINISTER INFORMATION MOAYYID INDICATED GOVERNMENT PLEASED WITH HOW ASSEMBLY DISCUSSION HAD GONE, NOTING THAT WHILE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD MADE NO CONVERTS RADICAL OPPOSITION HAD REALLY NOT LAID A GLOVE ON HIM. TWINAM

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